

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 INRE-00

INR-05 L-01 SSC-01 SP-02 IO-03 PRS-01 DRC-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6659

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

S E C R E T SAN SALVADOR 4176

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: CABINET RESIGNATIONS IMPACT ON HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR
NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4449

MANAGUA FOR LAZAR; PANAMA FOR AMBASSADORS CAMPBELL AND SANCHEZ

1. SUMMARY: TO EXTENT I COULD, I BRIEF FON MIN BORGONOVO AFTERNOON OCTOBER 17 ON CABINET RESIGNATIONS IN HONDURAS. BORGONOVO EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS MAY SIGNAL THE END OF THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT FUTURE COURSE OF GOH-GOES RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IF A NEW HONDURAN TEAM IS COMPELLED TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY GOH POSITION BEFORE ICJ OR OAS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT FON MIN BORGONOVO'S REQUEST AND RELYING, AS APPROPRIATE, ON INFO CONTAINED REFTEL, I BRIEFED HIM AND SUB-SECRETARY CASTANEDA AFTERNOON OCTOBER 17 ON CABINET CRISIS IN HONDURAS. LOCAL MORNING PRESS HAD CARRIED AP STORY THAT COS LOPEZ ARELLANO HAD REQUESTED
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RESIGNATION HIS ENTIRE CABINET, ATTRIBUTING THIS TO THE CRISIS STEM-

MING FROM HURRICANE FIFI, AND THAT FON MIN BATRES HAD BEEN FIRST MINISTER TO COMPLY.

3. BORGONOO STATED THAT GOES COULD DRAW NEITHER COMFORT NOR JOY FROM CABINET CRISIS IN HONDURAS. HE WAS PRESUMABLY DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED THAT BATRES' RESIGNATION SEEMED TO SIGNAL THE FAILURE OF

THEIR MUTUAL EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A MEDIATION FORMULA. HE COMMENTED SADLY THAT THIS SEEMED EITHER CASE OF HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF WHEREIN HONDURAN AND SALVADORAN NEGOTIATORS HAD MADE NOTEWORTHY PROGRESS TOWARD AGREEMENT ON A FORMULA FOR SETTLING THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE ONLY TO HAVE THE GOH WITHDRAW SUPPORT FROM ITS NEGOTIATOR BECAUSE OF UNFAVORABLE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. BORGONOVO SAID HE HAD BECOME ACUTELY AWARE OF THIS PITFALL IN HIS RECENT REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE SALVADORAN-HONDURAN DISPUTE PRIOR TO THE LATEST ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THAT REASON HE HAD METICULOUSLY CLEARED HIS OWN NEGOTIATING POSITION FULLY WITHIN THE GOES, TOUCHING BASE WITH EVERY KEY CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIAL AT EACH STEP IN THE PROCESS TO ASSURE SUPPORT. EVIDENTLY, BORGONOVO OPINED, HIS COLLEAGUE BATRES HAD GONE ABOUT HIS OWN BUSINESS IN A MORE INDEPENDENT MANNER AND HAD FALLEN VICTIM TO THE CONSEQUENCES. HE FELT THAT IT CAN NOW BE CONCLUDED THAT THE IMPACT OF HIRRICANE FIFI HAD BEEN UNFAVORABLE FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE IN THAT IT HAD HINDERED BATRES' EFFORT TO LOBBY OTHERS ON BEHALF OF MEDIATION AND HAD AGGRAVATED THE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING THE GOH.

4. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, BORGONOVO REGRETFULLY RECOGNIZED WHY THA GOH WAS RELUCTANT TO PROCEED WITH THE MEDIATION FORMULA THAT HE AND BATRES HAD NEGOTIATED AND AGREED UPON. HE OVERRIDING CONCERN AT THIS JUNCTURE, HE SAID, IS CENTERED ON THE QUESTION OF WHICH WAY THE GOH WILL NOW TURN AS REGARDS THE DISPUTE. HE REFERRED TO WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS THE TRADIATIONAL HONDURAN PENCHANT IN TIMES OF INTERNAL CRISES OF RESORTING TO MEASURES OF DISTRACTION BY CREATING PROBLEMS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, AND SAID HE SINCERELY HOPES THIS WOULD NOT NOW BE THE CASE.

5. BORGONOVO BELIEVES THAT IF THE GOH NOW FEELS COMPELLED TO
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ATTEMPT TO GAIN SATISFACTION BY PURSUIT OF VIGOROUS MEASURES EITHER THROUGH THE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN OR THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, SUCH A PATH COULD ONLY EXACCERBATE GOH-GOES RELATIONS, SINCE IT COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED SECRETLY, NOR COULD GOH BE EXPECTED TO AVOID TRYING TO CONDITION INTERNATIONAL AND WORLD PUBLIC OPINION BY PUBLICLY AND FORCEFULLY STATING ITS CASE. BORGONOVO SAID THAT GOES WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO DEFEND ITSELF, ALSO PUBLICLY AND FORCEFULLY, AGAINST ANY SUCH GOH TACTIC. HE FORSAW THE MEDIA

IN BOTH COUNTRIES JUMPING ON THE NATIONALIST BAND WAGONS, AND THE SITUATION HEATING UP AND LEAST RATIONAL SEGMENTS ON BOTH COUNTRIES CARRYING DAY TO OBVIOUS DETRIMENT OF SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTE. SINCE

BORGONVO FULLY EXPECTS GOES WOULD STOUTLY DEFEND ITS POSITION, HE ANTICIPATED THAT ANY STRATEGY GOH MIGHT PURSUE, WHETHER POLITICAL OR JURIDICAL WOULD RESULT IN A LONG AND DRAWN-OUT MULTI-YEAR PROCESS. NEITHER PARTY, THEREFORE, COULD RATIONALLY EXPECT EARLY SATISFACTION IF ITS ASPIRATIONS. REFERRING TO POSSIBILITY THAT GOH MIGHT GO TO ICJ, BORGONVO SAID THAT NEITHER COUNTRY CAN AFFORD THE MONETARY COSTS OF SUCH LITIGATION.

6. COMMENT: IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT BORGONVO IS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE PATH HE AND BATRES WERE TAKING HAS EVIDENTLY COLLAPSED. HE ADMITTED HE HAS NO IMMEDIATE IDEA ON HOW TO GET BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BACK ON TRACK GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTIES OF: WHO HE WILL BE DEALING WITH OR THE ATTITUDES OF ANY NEW GOH PLAYERS ON THE BASIC ISSUES.

7. BORGONVO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE USG MIGHT, IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER, PREVAIL ON THE GOH TO AVOID ANY FUTURE COURSE THAT MIGHT FURTHER EXACERBATE THE BILATERAL SITUATION AND, HE BELIVES, WOULD INEVITABLY HAVE SERIOUS NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS ON CENTRAL AMERICA AS A WHOLE. BORGONVO ASSURED OE THAT GOES HAS NO INTEREST IN EXPLOITING PRESENT GOH DIFFICULTIES AND REGRETS THAT THEY ARE OCCURING. HE SAID HE FULLY COGNIZANT THAT SUCH TROUBLES CAN ONLY HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON NEIGHBORS. HE HOPES HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSURANCES THAT IT BEARS NO ILL WILL TOWARDS HONDURAS WILL SOMEHOW BE CONVEYED TO GOH AND THAT THIS WILL SERVE TO DISSUADE GOH FROM MEASURES IN OAS OR ICJ ON BILATERAL DISPUTE THAT HE IS CONVINCED WILL ONLY BE HARMFUL TO BOTH PARTIES AND THEIR NEIGHBORS.
MOSKOWITZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, NEGOTIATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANSAS04176
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740296-0567
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741035/aaaabdrj.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: TEGUCIGALPA 4449
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CABINET RESIGNATIONS IMPACT ON HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO, (BORGONOV)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005